PAINTINGS BY LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY AND HIS CIRCLE

OBJECT GUIDE

It often comes as a surprise to visitors that Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) was a painter. In fact, he was a painter first and was recognized and appreciated in that medium.

Tiffany studied informally with George Inness (1825–94) when he was about seventeen. He exhibited successfully at New York’s National Academy of Design at the age of nineteen. At twenty, he went on to Paris, studying briefly with the academic painter Léon Charles Adrien Bailly (born 1826), but he was more influenced by the French Orientalist Léon Adolphe-Auguste Belly (1827–77). At twenty-three, Tiffany was made an Associate National Academician, and at thirty-three, he was elected to full membership in the Academy.

In Tiffany’s painting, scenes of Persia (modern Iran) and North Africa alternate with American landscapes and gardens. Tiffany came early to these two themes—nature and the exotic, the Orient in particular—and they would continue to be the chief inspiration for all the media he explored.

Though he never achieved in painting the level of international admiration and respect he earned for his work in the decorative arts, he has left many wonderful pictures that beautifully express the spirit of his age and his personal vision. In this installation, the Museum presents works from the...
collection that provide a view of Tiffany paintings in the context of artists who Tiffany believed in some way shared his commitment to beauty.

His circle of painting friends included Samuel Colman (1832–1920) and Lockwood de Forest (1850–1932), both of whom at various times played a role in one of the several firms Tiffany organized around the decorative arts. Similarities in subject and painting style are easily perceived in this installation. Elihu Vedder (1836–1923) also worked with Tiffany for a time and even designed a fountain sculpture for Tiffany’s Laurelton Hall estate. (The sculpture is pictured in an Alan Dunn watercolor in Gallery VI.)

In 1918 at Laurelton Hall, Tiffany created the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, which included a school to support and encourage young artists. Appreciating Tiffany’s aesthetic, these “fellows” painted amidst the beauty of the artist’s country gardens. Hugh F. McKean (1908–95), the first director of the Morse and husband of its founder, and Luigi Lucioni (1900–1988), a successful mid-twentieth-century American artist, were fellows of the foundation. Lucioni also served as an art advisor to the foundation, as did Charles Hawthorne (1872–1930) and Cecilia Beaux (1855–1942).

As a group, most of these painters were especially interested in nature and the nature of beauty. The work of these and other Tiffany-inspired painters are part of the Tiffany legacy.
The paintings in this exhibit are as follows:

1) The Land of Arcadia, 1848
   Oil on canvas
   Attributed to George Inness, 1825–94
   (P-086-80)

2) Top to bottom:
   A Memory of Lake George,
   late 19th century
   Oil on canvas
   Samuel Colman, 1832–1920
   Marks: A memory of Lake George /
   Painted by Saml. Colman -
   (P-027-81)

   Untitled Farm Scene, c. 1875
   Oil on artist’s cardboard
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933
   Marks: by / L C Tiffany
   Gift of Comfort Tiffany Gilder
   (75-003)

3) Headland, 1878
   Oil on paperboard
   Lockwood de Forest, 1850–1932
   Signed, lower left: L de F / Apr
   22/78
   (2008-015:09)

4) On the Hudson, near Dobb’s [sic] Ferry, 1870
   Oil on canvas
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933
   Signed, lower left: Louis C. Tiffany
   (78-0013)

5) Hudson River Landscape near Dobbs Ferry, c. 1870
   Oil on canvas
   Samuel Colman, 1832–1920
   (P-011-81)

6) Landscape with Evening Sky, c. 1880
   Watercolor on laid paper
   on brown board
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933
   Signed, lower left: Louis C. Tiffany
   Gift of Comfort Tiffany Gilder
   (55-019)

7) New England Forest, 1874
   Oil on paperboard
   Lockwood de Forest, 1850–1932
   Signed, lower right: L de F / June 6/74
   (2008-015:16)

8) Top to bottom:
   Boats along the Nile, 1878
   Oil on paperboard
   Lockwood de Forest, 1850–1932
   Signed, lower right: L de F / Apr
   17/78
   (2008-015:06)

   North African Harbor Scene, c. 1877
   Watercolor and gouache on paper
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933
   Signed, lower left: L C . T
   Gift of Susan and Edwin Linville
   (83-010)

9) Study for the Entombment window,
   c. 1892
   Oil on panel
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933
   Paper label: [coat of arms] / Louis
   C. Tiffany
   Gift of Comfort Tiffany Gilder
   (55-020)
10) **Winged Nymph**, *late 19th century* 
   Oil on canvas board  
   Elihu Vedder, 1836–1923  
   (P-001-73)

11) **Landscape with Waterfall**, *1924* 
   Oil on canvas  
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933  
   Signed, lower right: *Louis C. Tiffany / 1924*  
   (1999-002)

12) **Ruins of Old Florida Mission, New Smyrna**, *c. 1929* 
   Oil on canvas  
   Hugh F. McKean, 1908–95  
   (PF-019-97)

13) **Top to bottom:** 

   **Landscape with Figure**, *c. 1870* 
   Oil on paper  
   Louis Comfort Tiffany, 1848–1933  
   Signed, lower right: *Louis C. Tiffany*  
   (66-062)

   **Vermont Pasture**, *1931* 
   Oil on canvas  
   Luigi Lucioni, 1900–1988  
   Signed, lower right: *L. LUCIONI 31*  
   (P-078-93)

14) **Portrait of a Young Girl**, *c. 1920* 
   Oil on canvas  
   Charles W. Hawthorne, 1872–1930  
   Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Aldis  
   (P-084-80)

15) **Portrait of Mrs. Henry La Barre Jayne**, *c. 1895* 
   Oil on canvas  
   Cecilia Beaux, 1855–1942  
   (P-072-93)